



INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT SENIOR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



February 11, 2003

Roanoke City School Board Audit Committee
Roanoke, Virginia

We have completed an audit of the graduation requirements for the current Roanoke City Public School seniors. We performed this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-131-50 sets forth the requirements for the Standard, Advanced Studies, and Modified Standard Diplomas. Those requirements specify the level of courses and subject area disciplines students must complete to earn a credit in the areas of mathematics, laboratory science, history and social science, as well as the credit requirements in other content disciplines. The regulations also specify that the Board of Education can approve alternative courses to satisfy the requirements. The class of 2003 has the following credit requirements:

- Standard Diploma - 22 standard units of credit
- Advanced Studies Diploma - 24 standard units of credit
- Modified Standard Diploma - 20 standard units of credit

In order to receive any of these diplomas, students in the class of 2003 must also pass the literacy passport test (LPT).

The Roanoke City Public School system offers the diplomas mentioned above along with three additional diplomas: The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma (24 standard units of credit), Special Diploma, and Certificate of Completion. The IB Diploma is only offered at William Fleming to students who have completed IB requirements. Special Diplomas are awarded to students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their individualized education program. The Certificate of Program Completion is for students who have completed the prescribed programs of studies but do not qualify for a diploma.

The Supervisor of Guidance directs the guidance function for Roanoke City Public Schools. Each high school has a Guidance Coordinator that supervises the guidance counselors and who manages the guidance function at the school. The Guidance department has implemented additional procedures this school year to strengthen their controls and ensure that students complete the requirements for graduation. The new

procedures include written directions and check lists that are required to be used by each guidance counselor. Guidance counselors are required to have a minimum of two counseling sessions pertaining to scheduling, course selection, program options, and career and college planning annually with each assigned student. Students should have a minimum of eight counseling sessions during four years of high school.

Roanoke City Public Schools use the Pentamation student information system to record and report all student course work. The Pentamation system is used to produce official student transcripts and was audited by our department in 2002.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this audit was to verify that current procedures are operating effectively to ensure the Roanoke City Public School system is complying with Virginia Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-131-50 regarding the requirements for graduation.

SCOPE

We reviewed student records at William Fleming and Patrick Henry High Schools, as well as Noel C. Taylor Learning Academy, as of January 22, 2003.

METHODOLOGY

We statistically calculated a sample size based on the current senior student population of 592 students, a desired confidence level of 95%, an expected error rate of 1%, and a desired precision of +/-2.5%. Our results indicated we would need to review the records of 55 students in total. Based on the size of each school's senior student body, we selected a proportionate number of students for review using interval samples. We tested 32 student records at Patrick Henry, 22 student records at William Fleming, and 1 student record at Noel C. Taylor. In each case, we obtained the student's cumulative folder and reviewed the file to determine if the prescribed documents were on file. We also reviewed the completed course work, as well as the student's current enrollment, in order to evaluate the student's progress towards his or her desired diploma. We verified the accuracy of the information in the cumulative folder by comparing it to the student's transcripts printed from the Pentamation student information system.

RESULTS

We found that the required documents were on file in the students' cumulative folders and being used as prescribed in the procedures issued by Guidance. We also found that the information in the students' cumulative folders was consistent with the information on the student transcripts. In each case we reviewed, the guidance counselor involved appeared to be aware of the student's status regarding required course work and remaining requirements to be met in order to receive the degree sought by the student.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of our audit work, we believe that current procedures are operating effectively to ensure the Roanoke City Public School system is complying with Virginia Board of Education regulation 8 VAC 20-131-50 regarding the requirements for graduation.

We would like to thank the Guidance staff and administration for their cooperation and assistance during the audit.

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